

Liz Severyns, LCSW, Partner

I am not sure that anyone who knows me would be surprised that I majored in Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am a people person; a natural helper. I am all about meeting the needs of others. What most people are surprised about is that my career began as a crisis therapist for severely emotionally disturbed kids in the inner city of Chicago...in their homes. My father would ask constantly, “What is a nice, young Jewish girl doing working in the ghetto?” Sometimes I was not so sure! But I knew I was making a difference and I loved it. What I didn’t know until later is how many lessons I would take from them that I have carried with me into my personal and professional life.

So how does one go from being a crisis therapist with kids to a Partner at Focus Consulting Group? Believe it or not, it is not too far off!! My assessment skills have come in very handy to help quickly identify problems but really, it boils down to firms and teams being like families and they need the same things to be successful:

1. Respect
2. Communication
3. Trust
4. Accountability
5. Collaboration

And when there is a crisis in a family, it affects everyone. Same as an investment firm: If you have a “Red X” (or a global financial crisis) it can unbalance the entire system if it is not strong enough to endure.

I got my Master’s Degree at Loyola University in Chicago because I have a thirst for knowledge and I love to learn. What I really learned about myself in that program is that I want others to be able to reach their potential. I want to remove the roadblocks that prevent someone’s success. I want people to feel important, like they matter because everyone impacts everyone else...whether they know it or not. And I am a natural at doing these things.

My latest obsession: The Enneagram. I can truly say that this personality tool has been a life changer in my life, both personally and professionally. After all these years of being a daughter, sister, friend, wife (and ex-wife), mother, therapist, and partner at FCG, it came into focus with the Enneagram. We all have the same parts but knowing how we use them and why... now that is a game changer.

While I am not managing the assessments, projects or people at Focus, I am managing my three amazing teenagers, Nathan (14) and twin girls, Hannah and Rachel (13)...Yes, three kids in 13 months... Talk about a crisis!